

5 **Abstract**

The present invention relates to a molecular biological method for the specific detection of mycobacteria and for the differentiation of the *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* complex and *Mycobacterium avium* from other mycobacteria in clinical material by means of amplification primers and oligonucleotide probes which are specific for the genus- and species-specific regions of the 16S rRNA gene of mycobacteria.